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MR. HERVEY'S
CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
NIGHT,

Done into BLANK VERSE,

(After the Manner of Dr. Young)

By T. NEWCOMB, M. A.



L O N D O N :

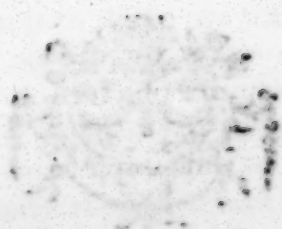
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THE HARTLEY
CONTRACTING

OF THE
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TO the HONOURABLE

The Lady JULIANA PENN.

May it please your ladyship,

PANEGYRIC, the usual and chief ingredient, in most dedicatory addresses, is of so nice and delicate a texture, that by saying too little, or too much, it forfeits all that esteem it lays claim to; and when faulty in either of these extremes, raises a dislike, where it designed to pay a compliment: if coarse and inelegant, it offends, when it attempts to please; and if unsupported by truth and reality, degenerates into nauseous flattery; and becomes painful to that judicious ear it vainly proposed to gratify; turning the sacrifice it offered to the unworthy into the severest satire; and the author's pen into the keenest sword. The praise we bestow upon those who merit it, ought to appear under a veil, which rather improves, than shades a beauty; like the *Parthian*, who is observed to hit the surest, when he seems to be retreating.

In affixing your ladyship's name to this poem, I have been cautious neither to offend your modesty, nor incur your displeasure, by enumerating those accomplishments and perfections, which you take greater care to conceal, than others to display; unperceived and unacknowledged, only by one person. True genuine merit, like the flame in a lamp, which scatters a stronger and more diffusive light, through the mirror, that seems to confine
and

D E D I C A T I O N.

and obstruct its lustre. This, if sincere and undulterate, beautifies while it enobles, and throws an additional glory on birth, titles, and grandeur.

Your ladyship is not to be informed that the design of sacred poetry is to improve, as well as please, a wholesome, as well as an agreeable entertainment: which gratifies the imagination, with an ultimate view to cultivate, refine, and moralize the heart. When it produces not these last salutary effects, the delight it conveys to the fancy may prove dangerous; and instead of a healing cordial, may instil into the mind a latent insinuating poison; resembling those noxious juices, of a tempting delicious flavour, which invite us to taste, only to destroy us. Like these fatal intoxicating pleasures, that allure, before they can infect us; and rob us of those grateful sensations, and that very happiness they pretended to communicate.

Mr. *Hervey*, in several learned and moral Contemplations, has obliged the world, with some of the most sublime and elevated strains of piety, and devotion, which if attentively perused, must affect the most unfeeling, and warm the coldest bosom; his sentiments breathe the most enflamed and ardent love of God, of goodness and of virtue; every page of his excellent writings imparting to us a double gratification; while our ear is transported with the smoothness and harmony of his diction; and our heart at the same time subdued and convinced, by the force and energy of his commanding and persuasive reason. And sure those pleasing inward transports, inspired by innocence and virtue, he must
first

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first have feelingly experienced, before he could so well and so warmly describe them.

Though I despair to reach the masterly eloquence, the sublimity and animated force of the originals, yet I have attempted a poetical version of some of Mr. *Hervey's* excellent Meditations. The power and attractive sweetness of numbers, often serving to allure, perhaps to convince, when reason and argument sometimes fail to command attention. Though virtue in her native dress and simplicity, ever appears amiable, yet poetry has a secret irresistible power, to augment its lustre; and render its beauties still more beautiful, and if the muse has the good fortune to arrest and entertain the fancy, her next triumph may be, to touch, subdue, and captivate the heart.

Though you (madam) were born to shine in a court; to brighten it with your person, as well as to improve it by your example; you chose rather to sacrifice the glitter and magnificence of a public, to the peace, innocence and tranquility, of a more private life: to convince a deluded world, that the sweetest and most exalted transports enjoyed below, are less owing to the pride of an ambitious, than to the applause, and approbation of a satisfied mind; it being always your peculiar aim, to live admired and respected, not so much for the superiority of your birth and titles, as for those gifts and accomplishments, which really adorn them; and render nobility itself, more noble and illustrious: birth and virtue, like light and shade in a landscape, helping to set off, and beautify each other.

What

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What pangs then must a heart like yours suffer, divided between pity and astonishment, to live a daily witness of those open and unguarded follies, those courtly sublime enormities which vanity has introduced, and custom, that fruitful parent of all absurdities, has authorized among us; licensed, applauded, may held almost sacred by the sons and daughters of levity and inattention; who claim a glory for those very acts of simplicity and imprudence, which contribute more to their contempt, than add to their fame.

Can your ladyship behold without a sigh, our theatres crowded, our temples empty, and deserted? Pride and poverty, extravagance and distress, ambition and wretchedness, a gay aspect, and a bleeding heart, often inhabiting the same roof; whole families to-day flourishing in their splendid chariots, and to-morrow begging their bread: scenes, that must surprise and astonish, did not the frequency of them lessen and abate our wonder; familiar, and almost universal, and for that reason, the less amazing.

I leave your ladyship, in a full and pleasing possession of all those bosom joys and satisfactions, which flow from the reflections of a conscious integrity, and unaffected virtue: a stranger to all those fluttering tumultuous gratifications, which turn the head before they can debase and corrupt the heart; which never add to, but always detract from those solid felicities of life, they pretend to entertain us with. While you (madam) live securely blest, in your domestic cares and amusements; more happy

in

DEDICATION.

in the smiles and innocence, of your beautiful encreasing family, than amidst the glaring pomps and joyless magnificence of an imperial palace.

Though it is no part of, or addition to your personal merits, yet the late noble and generous donation of the countess of *Pomfret*, to the university of *Oxford*, the most exquisite and valuable productions of Greece and Rome, will ever redound to the honour of your family; and remain a lasting monument of that distinguished regard she paid to that antient seat of politeness, and literature. Where Cicero, in a graceful and striking attitude, seems pleading again in a British capitol; and before as learned, and as august an assembly, as ever heard him haranguing in a Roman senate; while the orator still beholds from his *rostrum*, the rivals of his own eloquence, pursuing his steps, and ambitiously striving to emulate his glory.

May your ladyship's prudent and exemplary conduct, have a power, to undeceive the vain, and reclaim the vicious; and in a wanton degenerate age, fix a remorse, when it cannot compleat a reformation. May you live to convince the giddy volatile libertines of your sex, that the avenues leading to honour, reputation and happiness, open not through the pagan expanded doors of an opera, a masquerade or a playhouse. And you may venture to assure them from your own experience, that there is an art to be generous without extravagance, to be genteel and polite, without French embellishments; beautiful and engaging, without perfumes, paint, and washes; and your best endeavours will
be

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be undoubtedly employed to convince them, that you have known British ladies, who have lived and died very good christians, though they never frequented balls, drums, routs, or nocturnal assemblies; who have appeared amiable, and had reason to boast their conquests and admirers, though they never chose to be seen in public, like a *Venus* in her fountain, half naked.

I am, with the sincerest esteem

(Madam)

Your ladyship's most obedient humble servant,

T. NEWCOMB.

ERRATA.

Page 5. line 4. for trumpet, read trumpet's. p. 18. l. the last, for or, r. o'er. p. 25. l. 13. for unwaves, r. unweaves. p. 27. l. 20. for archangels, r. archangel. p. 34. l. 18. for then, r. when. p. 35. l. 3. for their, r. his. p. 37. l. 2. for shed and, r. shedding. p. 46. l. 17. for is, r. be. p. 49. l. the last, for roll, r. rolls. p. 56. l. 24. for when, r. where. p. 65. l. 20. for world, r. worlds.

N I G H T.

A

S A C R E D P O E M.

B O O K I.

TH E * solemn, serious trifles of the day
Which folly plans, or vanity admires,
Pleasing no more, as now the sun retires
Prone to his sea-green couch, the liquid fall
Of cooling dews, invite my soul to taste
Beneath an arching shade, the heart-felt joy
Of a calm eve, that sweetly clos'd the day!
The sun ne'er left behind an eve more fair.

Each passion hush'd, and every thought resign'd
In this recess, where nature strives to give
Each raptur'd sense, a soft, tho' distant joy,
The elm and * lime uniting o'er my head
Form a green canopy of flowing shades;

* Page 1.

† Page 2.

A

Which

Which quite extinguish'd every sultry beam
The sun had pour'd on earth, before he veil'd
His orb in darkness — underneath my feet
Was spread a carpet, wove in nature's loom,
Of softest velvet ; mossy beds with flowers
Embroider'd, pave the scented green alcove,
Where boughs of jes'mine, with the ivy twine
Their amorous arms around each spreading tree,
Fond of the kind embrace ; while all the air
Is sweetned with the odours which they breathe.

To cheer the wondering eye, a verdant arch
Cut thro' the branches of an opening grove
Presents the prospect of the bending sky,
Glittering with fainter light, and ebbing day ;
Joyous and grateful here, the feather'd choir,
In tributes of soft harmony present
Their thanks to heav'n, for every joy they feel,
E'er yet they sooth themselves to rest with songs.
While from some distant dome, a chearful horn
Breathes its melodious accents, softer made
By their long passage, to compleat the joy
Of the still eve, and concert of the grove.

Roving this calm recess, a nobler scene
Than the arch'd bow'r, green field, or ev'ning shade
Can image to my thought, my bosom fires !

Be then ye vales a while your sweets un Sung,
Thy notes, oh Philomel! unheard — a theme
That blots each soft idea from that breast,
Your odours and your music lately charm'd;
Now lifts me from the earth, above the skies
To feast on raptures, which the eye and ear
Ne'er lend to man — Say, whence the transport springs!
From * William's arm, from fam'd Culloden's field;
When the young hero, warm'd with pious rage
Deep dy'd his sword in curst rebellion's gore;
And lavish of his royal blood, secur'd
To Britain, freedom, — to a fire, his crown!
Whate'er I now possess; what blessings share
The gifts of heav'n, to sense or reason dear,
'Tis to his toils and gen'rous love I owe
Each bliss, the smiling morn or dewy eve
Pour from their lap, the eye or heart to cheer!
That unmolested thro' the silent vale
Of life I rove, not injur'd nor dismay'd
Or by the ruffian's frown, or traitor's rage;
And in this blest and calm retirement share,
Each solid joy, which contemplation yields.
Had dire Rebellion wav'd her ensigns o'er
This trembling isle, uncheck'd by William's arm,
Here in this balmy shade, this awful gloom,

* Page 3.

A 2

When

(When night awakes each sober thought, and calls
Reflection home to meditate, and dwell
On life's swift fleeting course,) I might have bled
By the keen dagger levell'd at my heart
By some assassin's rage, if uncontroll'd
His bloody flag had rag'd and scatter'd war
And desolation round, where'er it wav'd.
Some covert then, or rock's impending gloom,
Far from these fragrant seats and calm repose,
Had hid me from the victor's angry frown ;
And banish'd from these bow'rs, my soul had thus
Breath'd out her anguish — * Ye blest shades adieu,
To sooth no more my sultry steps each eve ;
Farewell ye lov'd retreats, ye pleasing toils,
Ye soft amusements of my rural hours !
Who now shall teach the mantling vine to clasp
The wedded elm ; who guide the woodbind's bough
With yon green limes, to arch into a shade ;
Whose hand shall rear the drooping flow'r, to meet
The sun's warm ray, and sip the dew of morn ?
Who teach the young espalier how to bend
Into a canopy, who guide the silver rill
To the parch'd fibres of the with'ring rose ;
Renew her bloom, and fringe her leaves with gold ?
Had treason not been forc'd to sheath the blade

Of her red reeking sword, to drop the steel
Her fury brandish'd o'er these realms of peace,
For the soft music of the wood and vale,
The trumpet's sound, and thunder of the war
Had pierc'd each ear, and chill'd each drooping heart.
The eye now pleas'd with nature's beauteous scenes,
Instead of these had only view'd the wrecks
Of ruin — cities girt and compass'd round
With perjur'd troops, and whelm'd in smoke and flames ;
The fruitful field with desolation cloath'd,
And the dire view of garments roll'd in blood ;
The virgins sigh unheard, the ruffian's steel
Drench'd in a father's or a brother's gore.
Instead of chearful * peace, with olive crown'd
Sheltring our blest abodes ; or her, who holds
Th' impartial scale of justice in her hand,
Her brandish'd sword fell tyranny had wav'd,
And slav'ry o'er the realm had clank'd her chain.
In vain the grape had redden'd to the sun,
Open'd her purple clusters, and in vain
Pour'd out her gen'rous juices, to make glad
The heart of man, or chear the mourner's brow !
If like a harpy, hov'ring o'er the bowl,
Fell tyranny had stood and snatch'd the draught
From the parch'd lip of industry and care !

* Page 5.

See now the * sun, declining to make way
 For night's approach, has ting'd the western clouds,
 And skirted round each vapour's edge with gold ;
 In darkness now he shrouds his vanish'd beams,
 And night ascending mounts her sable throne !
 How chang'd, how gloomy, ev'ry scene that glow'd
 So late with beauties — earthly scenes divine !
 Faint and more faint the sick'ning splendors die,
 That streak'd yon skies ; a louring sadness hides
 Each flow'r's expiring lustre ; while the gold,
 That edg'd the gay carnation, flames no more ;
 Each object wearing one sad mournful hue.
 Such would the aspect seem of all the scenes
 Of joy and beauty chearing now her isle,
 If Britain, doom'd to arbitrary sway,
 E'er bends her humble knee to lawless pow'r.

While † musing lonely thus, the lamp of day
 Shoots headlong in the western wave, to cool
 His fiery chariot — see the shade extends,
 And lengthens as he sinks ; his ample orb
 Just hanging o'er the ocean's verge, now shews
 His face more ample. Thus each mercy lent
 By heav'n to man, while present and enjoy'd,
 Is lightly valued ; but more highly priz'd

* Page 5.

† Page 6.

Book I. N I G H T.

7

The moment it is lost --- see now he sinks
Beneath the dusky world, yet still bequeaths,
To cheer the earth, some faintly streams of light,
Fleeting and short, like other joys of man ;
Now his rays tremble weakly thro' the air ---
The moment I am gazing, they expire !
Ev'n twilight now retires, and leaves the world
To the dark empire of its sister night.

What has one moment done ? how sudden lowr'd
The beauteous face of nature ; ev'ry tree,
Each flow'r that lately open'd to the morn
Its * bloom and lustre, shine no more to cheer
The eye of man ; each animal now joins
With objects all inanimate, to moan
The sun quite lost ; whatever sweet, or fair,
Or pleasing o'er the face of nature smil'd,
Now wears a sullen gloom ; sportive no more
Along the verdant lawns the lambkins play ;
Or frisk in gamesome rings — the shepherd tir'd,
Imposes silence on his rural reed ;
And sooths with mellow notes the vale no more.
No tuneful sound is heard, no music breathes,
But that the lonely plaintive stock-dove pours

* Page 6.

Along

Along the night, to wooe her list'ning mate,
That sits and hears with joy her mournful song.

Should man be vain at this dread midnight hour
When silence reigns, the heav'n and earth would join
To chide his levity — this awful gloom
Should lift his soul on contemplation's wing,
Sedate and solemn as the closing day ;
Howe'er his social hours each eve are chear'd
With harmless pleasures, let each night array'd
In her dark fable habit toll the bell
That wakes reflection ; serious thoughts inspires.
Say, can the soul, which hovers o'er the tomb
Each dreadful moment, chuse a part more wise,
Than, stealing from the giddy crowd each eve,
From the gay round of folly, to reflect
On life's short date, its nearness to the grave ;
How soon eternity begins, how vast
The debt she has to cancel, e'er her peace
Is sign'd in heav'n, which mercy scarce can sign ;
Her guilt how weighty — and how weak her pow'r ?

When now the ardors of the sultry day
Abate, how pleasing and how cool the eve ;
Enliven'd nature feels its balmy pow'r,
Which lends new vigour to the enfeebled steer,
Fresh verdure to the plant ; the fragrant air

Now

Now cherish'd with its soft and genial dews,
Receives new force, exerts a stronger pow'r
To animate the beauteous births that cloath
The tree, the garden, and the vernal field ;
T' expand the lilly, and unfold the rose !
This nature's great alembick, which distils
Its sov'reign cordial ; the refreshing show'r
Now wakes to life the vegetable world,
With the rich moisture pouring from its urn !

Did the sun always dart its fierie ray
To parch the glebe, its sultry beams would dry,
Or dissipate, e'er yet compact, the dews
That fall each cooling eve, before they form
The silver drops that hang on ev'ry spray.
Each wind, the gentlest breath that fans the air,
Would disunite the vapours, and the ray
Incessant, into exhalations turn !
But cherish'd by the stillness of the night,
Condensing by its coolness, they compose
That temper'd rich humidity, which cheers
The earth, as sleep exhilarates the soul !

Such are thy charms, oh * solitude divine !
The world a troubled sea ; and who can build

* Page 11.

B

A

A stable purpose on the rolling wave !
The world a school of wrong, and who that reads
Its fatal lectures, does not feel his soul
Warp'd by its influence ? on this glassie main
How quick and how insensibly we slide
From virtue, and each purpose of the heart,
Prompting to pious acts — some sacred truth
Which *yesterday* impress'd upon our soul
In lively characters, is here obscur'd,
Perhaps defac'd for ever ! while we tread
This dangerous scene, some noble purpose wrought
By heav'n, within our breast, by folly's charm
Is damp'd, is shaken, and at last o'erthrown.
Some vanity, which oft with sacred vows
We solemnly renounc'd, again enslaves
The heart, and binds it faster in its chains.
Say beauty ! does thy sweetness want a pow'r
To touch the soul, and wake the warm desire ?
How often has the tongue of flatt'ry dropt
Its luscious poison in our list'ning ear,
And swell'd us into pride ? how oft a look
Of disrespect, a gust of passion rais'd
Within our bosom ? ah how soon betray'd
Our virtue ! of so delicate a thread
Our innocence is woven, that it breaks
Or withers in the crowd, that taints its bloom.
We cannot touch the world, without a stain !

We see, we hear with danger ! ev'ry scene
From life to death, from childhood to a tomb,
Except these shades, alluring us to ill.

Here * peace and safety dwell, no busy cares,
Nor bold intruding follies ere molest
These glooms, frequented only by the wife.
Here silence holds the door against the tongue
Of biting slander ; and the nauseous tales
That madness utters o'er the midnight bowl ;
Hence the vain swarm of images are chas'd,
The giddy phantoms that beset us round
Amidst life's gawaw vanities, which drive
And banish from the soul each serious thought,
Nurst only in these guiltless solemn shades.

Say, can my heart a wish more ardent pour
To heav'n, than pensive in these glades alone
To drop each thought of earth --- my soul untaught
To muse on any scene beneath the sky ;
Than, when the hand divine lets fall the veil
Of night, which shuts the world from mortal's view,
To learn that sacred science, only taught
In wisdom's school, my self to search and know.
Here undisturb'd and free, the soul at ease,
May rally all her dissipated powers ;

*.Page 12.

B 2

Virtue,

Virtue, long exil'd from the foul, regain
Her native energy — this solemn hour
Heav'n gives the mind to blot out all her stains,
The fell contagion which example spreads
Where'er it breaths its poison ; in this calm
Retirement, let me strive to crush the foe,
The rebel in my heart ; tho' not to gain
A crown, a conquest priz'd beyond a crown,
A victory o'er my self — Throng then, ye poor
Ambitious slaves, the levees of the great,
To awful grandeur bend the trembling knee ;
To solitude my visits shall be paid,
Each solemn eve, which warms the raptur'd soul
With extacies more sweet than the gay scenes
The buskin'd theatre presents to view ;
Than all the pageant honours which a throne,
The gawdy titles which a crown bestows.
Call'd I this * solitude ? am I alone ?
Ah check the impious thought ! tho' sever'd far
From the world's eye, and earth's tumultuous joys,
Tread I alone this cool sequester'd shade ?
Millions of flaming spirits walk their round
Unseen, both when we sleep, and when we wake !
Perhaps this hour patrolling thro' the gloom
They watch my nightly walk — and join their voice

With mine, to sing the great Creator's praise !
Their golden wings perhaps they now * expand
To shield me from the terrors of the shade ;
From the blue pestilence that flies by day,
Or the keen shaft, by night that wings its speed !
These heavenly guards, who joy in human joy,
The convert hail, by penitence redeem'd,
From death to life ! and with a pious care
Support the good man's steps ; to this recess
May follow us, unmark'd, may be our guides
Each solitary moment, while we muse
Observ'd by none, but heav'n's all-piercing eye,
Beneath the roof of this cool nightly shade.

What solemn thoughts do these dark scenes inspire ;
What reverential awe subdues the soul,
And wakes it into wonder, while it views
Itself the care of Gods ; by night, by day
Heaven's flaming ministers, the guards of man.
With the same trembling steps, I tread the gloom,
As when beneath the venerable roof,
Or nigh some hallow'd temple's sacred shrine
I move, and own within the Godhead thron'd.
Be aw'd my heart ! to these still cool abodes,
Bring nought but chaste affections, pure desires,

Pride humbled, ev'ry ruffling passion calm'd.
Let fancy paint, and image to the mind
No vain or loose ideas, to estrange
The soul from virtue --- breathe no wish, my soul,
But what an angel, or a God may hear.

'Tis * possible I now am compass'd round
With witnesses invisible, who read
Each thought my heart is forming, and attend
The stillest whispers which my soul can breathe.
Be this a doubt, be angels far or nigh ;
Heaven's God is present, and is always near.
That dreadful pow'r who built the heav'ns, who strew'd
The firmament with stars ; who whirls each day
Ten thousand worlds along the flaming sky ;
To whom, with faces veil'd, the cherubs bow,
And tremble, as they near approach his throne ;
That God surrounds, supports, pervades me - - gives
That life I now enjoy ; in whose kind smile
I live, by whose tremendous frown I die !

The world's wide circuit, all the heav'ns surround,
Beneath their canopy ; the broad expanse
Of nature, stretch'd from earth to meet the sky,
All this, the temple, fair, august, sublime,
Built by the hand divine, a seat to hold

The Godhead thron'd — yet in these silent shades
Shut from the view of ev'ry human eye,
I stand before his majesty reveal'd
And visible, oft as my vows I pour,
At his dread shrines, or at his altars bend.
Where'er I worship then, whene'er I kneel,
Oh, pay, my soul, that homage which is due,
To him who built these worlds, and built for thee ;
In ev'ry stage of life from youth to age,
Feel no ambition, only how to please,
No happiness, but to enjoy his smile.

How raptur'd and sublime the *Hebrew's* strain,
Teaching the heart to tremble, at that eye
Which looks all nature through ; and at one view,
Piercing the earth, the sea, th' unbounded skies,
Can penetrate alike, both light and shade !
Attend the solemn song — with dread attend !
“ Whither, my soul, when fearful to * behold
The Deity enrag'd, canst thou repair ?
Where hide thee, that his eye may not pursue !
If with the light'ning's haste, or tempest's speed,
I chuse the morning's wing, and climb the high
Sublime of heav'n, there cloth'd in purest light
The Godhead sits enthron'd — or should my fear

Transport me to earth's centre, deep below;
There, in the dreary depths of hell is rear'd
His dark pavilion, awful in the shades;
If to the eastern climes I rove, where first
The rose morn awakes, or to the west
Fly swifter, than oh sun, thy swiftest ray;
No climes, no heights above, or depths beneath,
The air, the sky, the deep abyfs, that holds
The bounded ocean, all too thin to skreen
Thy footsteps from his eye, who with a glance
Cuts thro' ten thousand worlds — yet try once more,
If on the wings of thought thou canst convey
Thy self, beyond creation's utmost bounds;
To spaces which the sun has never view'd;
Here circled with immensity divine,
Or clos'd within the hollow of his hand
I gaze — and dread to meet a God so near!"

Pleasing, yet dreadful truths! let ev'ry line
You dictate, be close woven in my heart;
Till faith, and my existence seem but one.
While gently gliding down the stream of life,
(My study only wisdom's sacred page,)
I learn the heav'nly science to disdain
The frantick world's amusements, custom's toys.
Teaching each thought to dread that awful pow'r,
Hid, and invisible to mortal sight;
By faith, and reason's eye, how clearly seen.

Those

Those are the happy few, and blest alone
Who live convinc'd of heav'n's * omniscient pow'r,
And taste the joy of its endearing smile !
If dangers threaten, or if ills surround,
See the kind parent near, to hush their cares ;
And o'er their head to throw the guardian shield.

Dares man complain, his lonely hours are spent
In solitude each day, without a friend ;
When present and conversing with a God,
The noblest fellowship — who hears each thought,
When open'd to the soul in all his pow'r ;
In mercy shining, or with vengeance arm'd.
Say, does man sigh, when chusing to retire
From the world's serious follies, from each scene
Of busy life ; which while it pleases, tires.
Oh rather blest the change, from vain to wise !
Here, in these guiltless shades to muse alone
On nature's God, the raptur'd soul inspires
With purest joys — chaste, noble, and divine ;
While prostrate on our bending knees, we breathe
Our vows in secret to that list'ning pow'r,
Who in the stillest whisper reads the soul.

What transport does that pious bosom feel,
Which spreads its various woes before the throne,

Th' indulgent eye of heav'n ? which pours its tears
Into that pitying breast, which takes delight
To sooth the sad, the wounded heart to heal.
When safe beneath the cov'ring of his wing,
We drop all human friendships, in exchange
For joys more sweet, for pleasures more divine;
Possess'd of these, we touch the gates of heav'n,
And almost taste its bliss before we die !

A * silence how profound now wraps the world !
Each breath is noise ; the gently-sliding wheel
That moves the watch's hour, distinctly heard !
Each whisper is a sound — the din no more
Perceiv'd, which from each street the city pour'd.
His rural reed now hush'd, the shepherd leaves
Untun'd and silent, at the midnight hour !
Nor from the spray or grove the music heard
Breath'd from the nightingale's smooth plaintive tale.
All nature calm'd to rest, each lip is seal'd ;
Not the least whisper quivers thro' the air,
Or motion stirs the leaf, or sleeping bough ;
Eccho herself without a voice ; the ear
Expanded, tries in vain to catch a sound,
And hears no more, than what the liquid fall
Of murm'ring rills, of pebbled beds conveys !

In this deep silence, at this solemn hour,
That drops a curtain o'er the eye of day,
Should the last trump the sleeping world alarm,
(Loud rival to the thunders of the sky)
How dread the blast ! how awful were the sound,
Swell'd by the breath of angels, to amaze
Man's heart, the moment that it rends the air.

Say then, my soul ! can thy weak feeble pow'rs,
Sustain the shock, when bursting thunders roll
Thro' earth, thro' heav'n, thro' seas and flaming skies ?
When light'nings dart their fires, and as they blaze,
The startled dead awake, the living die !
When sick'ning * nature drops a tear, and all
The jumbling elements, distinct no more,
Mix in one gen'ral mass ! — Tremendous scene !
That stuns each sense ; each trembling thought confounds,
Shaking the heart of man ; prepare to meet
Thy God, my soul ! be humbled in the dust
Each day before him — if the righteous † few
Are hardly sav'd, where shall the sinner fly
In that dread hour, at that alarming call,
That opes the grave, unbars the gates of death,
Rouzing the mould'ring tenants of the tomb,
Who long have slept in undisturb'd repose,
Up from their marble mansions ! Shall the sound

* Page 22, 23.

† Page 24.

Pour'd from the angels trump, not pierce the ear,
Nor thro' the ear dart terror to the heart ;
Which thund'ring from the vaults of heav'n, shall shake
The pillars of the rended earth, and reach
The deep recesses of hell's gulf below ?
How will the crowd, devote to wrath divine,
Bear th' alarming summons to a bar
More dreadful --- Thou my heart attend
The whisp'ring voice within, which bids thee close
With those kind mercies which a bleeding God,
A victim Saviour courts thee to enjoy !
When thou can'st call a Deity thy friend,
The midnight cry shall all its terrors lose ;
And the last trump be music to thy ear !
Welcome and sweet to thy reviving clay,
As freedom on the fetter'd slave bestow'd :
This the great import of the solemn sound ---
Ye tenants of the dust, awake and sing !

How still the world * in this dread silent hour !
The pulse of nature seems to beat no more !
Night dropping her brown curtain from the cloud,
Like a strong opiate closes ev'ry eye,
And from its toil each wearied arm relieves.
Action and life but now, in various cares
Themselves exerted ; ev'ry crowded street

Swarm'd with a buzzing crowd, the country round
A scene of sweat and dust, the fever'd air
Cut by the fleeting wing of birds and bees ;
Pale Care sat poring o'er her midnight lamp,
Projecting schemes ; while Industry awake
Dip'd her broad oar, or ply'd her busie loom !
But see, how chang'd the scene, the rustic's voice
In the deep furrow'd fields, is heard no more :
The steer quite languid, with the setting sun,
Presses his grassy couch ; the winged choir
For sleep repairing to their nests of down !
A face of deep and dead repose has seiz'd
The universe ; while wearied winds forget
To stir the grove, and gently moving gales
Have fann'd themselves to rest ; the quiv'ring leaf
Of the still silver aspin, waves no more !

Just such shall be the awful scene, but far
More awful and momentous, when the * shades
Of that long ev'ning, which so close pursues
Death's wasting footsteps, shall their cov'ring spread
O'er a devoted world — This day, this hour,
Prostrate thyself before heav'n's golden throne,
While mercy has an ear ; the shrouded dead
When mix'd with dust, and coffin'd in their urn,
Forbid to send a sigh, or pour a groan

* Page 26.

Up

Up to the gate of heav'n, which death has clos'd
And barr'd for ever : the dark silent tomb
Ne'er breathes a sorrow, never drops a tear ;
Shed only from the sinner's waking eye.
When the dark curtain falls, that shuts the scenes
Of the world's theatre, the play is o'er ;
No second stage allow'd to act again
The comic farce of life — the sentence then
Pronounc'd — Ye pious, ever pious live !
Ye guilty, with your guilt, be ever stain'd.

If so, my * soul, ah catch the flying hour !
The only moment lent thee to secure
The bliss of heav'n, thy virtue's sure reward.
Each sand that drops from thy still ebbing glass
Is lost for ever — And shall want of thought,
Or pleasure's smile, still lull thee on the down
Of vain security ? Start then my soul,
Rouse from thy sleeping trance, life's waking dream !
Improve the seed-time of the present hour,
To reap the harvest in the fields of light,
Blooming and fresh for ever ; think in time
This day, this present moment lost, may lose
Eternity, and bar the doors of heaven
Against another sigh, or future pray'r !

* Page 27.

How

How,* quick the day is vanish'd ! ah how near
Its hasty setting to its early dawn ?
Insensibly its moments slide away,
Silent and unperceiv'd ; where'er we roam,
Howe'er employ'd, when waking and in dream,
'Time wings its rapid course, pursues its flight,
'Thro' day, thro' darkness — Tho' man's heedless eye
Marks not its fiery progress, yet the sun
That measures out our life, still rolls along,
And in its swift career and ceaseless round,
Whirls all our weeks and months, and years away ;
Writes ev'ry hour in the records above,
That guilt has ever lost, or virtue claim'd ;
Dread witnesses, that quit, or else accuse ;
Consign us to a dungeon or a throne ;
A paradise of bliss, or lake of fire !

Shall man complain of time's slow tardy wing,
Or weep, his pinions can no faster fly ;
Try ev'ry art t^o accelerate its speed,
And drive its headlong torrent faster on ?
Tho' the swift bark, moves slower than the day
(A tempest in its sails) along the main ;
Scarce equall'd by the eagle's rapid flight
That leaves the blast behind, whene'er he cleaves
The cloud, and darts upon his trembling prey !

Time now is fled — lost all its fleeting hours !
How short a stay the fugitive has made ?
Just like some modish courtly dame, who pays
Her visit, takes her seat — then bids adieu.
Behold, thro' fancy's mirror, what a scene
The phantom opens, ample, wide, and fair,
Each golden minute, bearing as it flies
Imaginary raptures on its wing ;
Flatt'ring my fond deluded heart with dreams
Of lasting pleasure — but alas, how soon
This fairy Eden to a waste is turn'd ?
The distant landscape, spacious, ample, green,
Which sporting fancy drew, weigh'd in the scale
Of cool experience, shrinks and dies away.
Such to the mast-man's eye, his bark with seas
And skies surrounded, seems Britannia's shore ;
Her cliffs now sink, now lessen, now are lost,
As from the rounded top on which he stands
He throws a last sad look, and bids adieu,
To her lov'd island, now an isle no more,
While mingling both, as farther he retires
The cloud and land are one — how clearly now
Do I discern the cheat of earthly joys
Delusive phantoms ! vanish'd, e'er enjoy'd ;

Say, what is Pleasure ! Folly's eldest child ;
Begot by Error, nurs'd by Phrenzy's dream,

Like

Like the thin bubble, dancing on the wave,
 That floats on fancy's surface for a while
 Shining, tho' empty — reason breaks it quite,
 One serious thought dissolves its glittering round,
 And turns it into nothing — let the mind
 By sage conviction taught, at last believe
 Nothing, the sun beholds in all his round,
 Abiding here, or durable, or strong,
 (Our fortress only dust, our rock but sand)
 'Till mounting up yon heav'ns from out the tomb
 Eternity our stable bliss secures:
 The cable of man's life a twist of air,
 One breath dissolves, or thread by thread unweaves
 The feeble texture — at a truth so rude
 And so uncourtly, youth, perhaps may smile —
 Hear then this truth confirm'd by sober age;
 While ripe for death, and bending to the grave,
 The hoary (*a*) sage in sadness thus complains —

“ Twice forty winters, evil all, have roll'd
 “ O'er this declining head; these cheeks have plow'd
 “ With furrows — whiten'd ev'ry hair with snow;
 “ No night unpain'd; no day without a tear!
 “ A life stretch'd out to such a period, seems
 “ How long and large to youth's unheeding thought,
 “ That swells a day, a moment, to a year;

(*a*) *Job.*

D

“ To ”

- " To me how short and transient, who have try'd
 " The sad experiment? To me, each year
 " Fleeting as is the shadow that outflies
 " The eastern wind; methinks, 'tis but to-day
 " I dropt my childish toys, so small a space
 " 'Twixt life and death, the cradle and the grave!
 " The infant smiles, and in a parent's arms
 " While smiling, fate enwraps him in a shroud;
 " To die, and to be born, are almost one."

Fix in thy heart, vain youth, each eve and morn
 These solemn truths, experienc'd age has told;
 By heav'n prescrib'd, and vouch'd by reason too;
 Make the same count of time in its career
 Advancing, as the thought convinc'd will frame,
 When life's swift gliding sands are just run down;
 And e'er its shuttle, yet has pass'd the loom,
 Oft ask thy heart, how weighty is the charge
 That heav'n assigns, the moments yet how few,
 Lent, to compleat the duties it commands!
 Hast thou ne'er mark'd the pious few, who chose
 To stamp their Maker's image on the soul,
 Full beam'd with heav'nly beauties, zeal and love
 And purity divine? Oh strive to write
 The fair example deeply on thy heart,
 Without an hour's delay — the fleeting sand
 That fill'd thy glass, is half already fall'n;
 And the small pittance left, in act to fall.

Tell

Tell then thy soul, e'er yet it wings its flight,
What dread events are on one moment hung;
The present hour that flies may be her last;
Bear her to bliss, or to a sea of fire;
Circle with glory, or a wreath of flame:
The scale tho' even now, one virtue more,
Or vice, may lift to heav'n, or sink to hell.
Suppose thy cunning, to evade a while.
Death's stroke, had made a cov'nant with the grave,
To stretch life's period to a patriarch's age,
How short would seem that lengthen'd span, how soon
The wax would melt, and mould'ring lease expire?
Extend the time of life, yet farther still,
Have thou and nature but one common doom;
Survive to hear the groan the world shall pour
When all its tenants in one gen'ral blaze
Shall mix confus'd, and sigh to heav'n in vain!
That hour, already near, is fix'd above —
See the dread scroll uplifted to the sky!
The great arch-angel, shews the warrant sign'd
By heaven's own hand — *that time is now no more!*
Try then, vain man, to still the mighty sound,
To respite the world's fate, and nature's doom;
An empire's wealth, unable to recall
The fix'd decree, or change the sentence pass'd,
Both ratify'd above, without appeal,

Was ever blast so full of terror pour'd?
So deep and loud, with such amazement arm'd!
The mighty sound, denouncing, not the fall
Of bounded empires, (an ignoble prey
For wrath divine, incens'd) foretells the doom
Of all the sun e'er view'd beneath the sky;
Strikes off the wheels of nature, and of time,
Bids ages cease, and generations roll
No longer, with one potent voice consigns
A world to dissolution, and the flames.

Chide if thou wilt, the arrow's tardy flight,
When bounding from the string; or sweep away
The orient gem, the refuse of thy store;
Throw majesty aside, lay crowns in dust,
Spurning the golden circle from thy brow,
Nor yet be blam'd — But ah, thy sacred hours
(Grav'd in heav'n's annals with a point of steel)
Wast not in vain — beyond the gem or crown
Their awful value; bearing to the sky
Reports each day of all we act below:
If well improv'd, sure pledges of our bliss,
If lost, the sad presages of our woe.

The END of the FIRST BOOK.

N I G H T.

A

S A C R E D P O E M.

B O O K II.

NOW * darkness on its brown nocturnal car
Shadows the drowsy world ; nor falls at once
But steals with gradual steps upon the day !
Which slowly from its rival night retires.
While sunk beneath the ocean's verge, the sun
Still beams a glimm'ring twilight round, to cheer
The universe, enlight'ning, tho' unseen.
How slow the shades advance ! how gently seize
That golden seat, when light was late enthron'd !
Nature had sicken'd, and confess'd her fear,
Had the bright splendor of the day been lost
At once in midnight gloom ; creation's self
Perhaps had stood amaz'd, nor could man's eye

* Page 31.

Without

Without a pain have bore the sudden change.
How kind the Night, thus climbing to her throne
By gentle steps ; how decent her approach !
Sending her harbinger, the twilight gleam
Before her, to proclaim her visit near ;
That man, to meet the stranger might prepare,
And without dread expect th' approaching shade.

How bounteous and profuse the hand which sheds
Its various gifts on man ; how kind its pow'r ?
The sweet vicissitudes of night and day,
Of toil and rest, the seasons fixt return,
Each dying into each ; the vernal flow'r
In winter hid, and op'ning with the spring
That paints the mead, makes vocal ev'ry grove ;
How wise the schemes of heav'n ! how blest each change,
All plann'd by love divine, that man may taste
That fleeting life with joy, its breath inspir'd.

A thousand prowling * monsters now, the night
Calls from their forest dens — along the shades
They pace majestic — death is in their eye ;
While stung with hunger, panting to embrace
Their jaws in gore, they roam their dreadful rounds.
The trembling swain, benighted in the wilds

Now stands aghast, to hear the midnight yell
Of wolves and panthers, and the lion's roar !
He starts at ev'ry sound, the softest breeze
Is thunder in his ear — he turns his eye
Tow'rds his lov'd cottage now, where slumb'ring lies
His cradled infant, gently lull'd to rest
By the fond mother, partner of his cares ;
Who trembling for his life, and bath'd in tears
In her low cell awaits his wish'd return.

Nor these the savages alone, that court
Night's covert ; other monsters that assume
The form of man, chuse to frequent the shades :
And muffled up in darkness, plan their schemes
Of midnight murder : the hot lecher now
Tho' friendship's sacred ties his steps restrain,
Steals to his neighbour's bed ; th' assassin draws
His sword, to sheath it in a brother's heart ;
While Faction forms her dark cabals, and weaves
Her secret plots, befriended by the shade.
Crimes that would blush to view the eye of day
Stalk boldly and audacious in the gloom,
Secure in folly's thought, from heav'n's survey ;
The guilt, from human knowledge, if conceal'd.

Say, does it sleep conceal'd ! has the thin veil
That screens it from the view of man, a pow'r
To hide it from that piercing eye more keen

Than

Than the red light'ning's flash, and brighter far
Than twice ten thousand suns — to whom the shade,
Is morning ; and the night a radiant day.
In the thick gloom and shadow, where we fly
For shelter, lives the Deity enthron'd ;
Who marks each silent whisper which we breathe,
And each close purpose which the heart conceives.

* 'Twas but this moment, from the flinty stone
The horse's hoof struck fire ! I plainly view'd
The spark at distance, kindling thro' the shade !
Not the least glimpse of which had been descry'd
Tho' near; when sparkling, in the light of day.
So when pale sickness draws a pensive veil
O'er the gay vanities that swell'd our heart ;
When some involving cloud blots out the light,
And dims the splendor of our former state ;
What strong convictions open, and display
The brightest truths, which in her flatt'ring smiles
And fortune's sunshine, long had lay'd conceal'd :
Vice, the gay gawdy strumpet now resigns
Her soft allurements ; the grim fury wears
The grizly looks of hell, from whence she sprung !
While Virtue, when beneath heav'n's low'ring frown,
Smiles in the gloom, with more than mortal charms,
Emerging always fairer from her shade.

With me the sons of * sorrow learn to prize,
And hail each kind distress, that pours a light
Into the soul, and gives her to behold
Each blessing clearer, thro' a cloud survey'd ;
When present, scorn'd — how dear, when unenjoy'd.
That pow'r how kind, who always in a smile
Conveys his anger, in meer pity meant
To kill a folly, or a heart to mend.

But see, the † darkness has quite snatch'd away
Each splendid graceful object from the eye ;
All nature seems one dismal blank, which hides
Her various beauties — ah how soon are fled,
The lovely tinges that so lately glow'd
In the gay tulip's leaf? The blush expir'd
Which beautify'd the rose's opening bloom ;
The snowy hue now lost, which lately pal'd
The lily's fragrant cheek — I cast my eye
Tow'rds some proud distant seat, but gazing find
Th' aspiring columns, and wide ample dome
All mixt in wild confusion ; thro' the gloom
The palace and the cottage seem but one,
Nature's fair bloom and elegance quite lost ;
Of the same height the mountain and the vale ;

* Page 36.

† Page 39.

E

See

* See here an emblem of those cheerful beams,
 That sun of glory, man's Redeemer pours
 Into the dark'ned soul --- without whose rays
 Midnight would drop, and blot out ev'ry hope
 From man's despairing bosom; should I live
 Shut from his merits, stranger to his love,
 What could my spirits cheer, even when I roam
 Thro' these gay beds of flow'rs, this wild of sweets,
 The opening morn or fragrant eve unfold?
 Amidst creation's beauties, fortune's smiles,
 The richest gifts her kind profusion pours
 Into her favourite's lap, without a claim
 To his endearing love, would please in vain!
 With sighs, and wormwood dash'd, each bitter joy:
 I, like the criminal in fetters chain'd,
 Led thro' enamell'd fields, and flow'ry plains,
 To dye the ax, or bleed upon the wheel.
 But when I view the Saviour's gushing wound,
 This in the midst of darkness, is a ray
 Bright'ning the raptur'd soul; and this the oyl
 Which gives that cheerful smile, the aspect wears;
 The bliss that warms the heart, that makes each joy
 Which heaven bestows, a joy, without a tear.

† From morn to eve the wearied peasant toils,
 His cares scarce ended with the closing day!

* Page 38.

† Page 38.

What

What balm, what sovereign Cordial is prepar'd
To string his aching nerves, and to renew
Their vigour, quite exhausted? See the night
Drops her brown curtain --- from her drowfy couch
Inviting balmy sleep to close his eye.
O'er every sense whose kindly opiate pour'd
Re-kindles his lost ardour, to sustain
The sweat and labour of th' approaching morn.
How kind that pitying power, who gives us sleep
To sooth the soul's distress, and body's toil;
Beneath whose shade our wearied limbs repair
Their sprightly vigour: every pensive thought
Now drops its load of sorrow, pines no more:
Lull'd in the arms of sleep, each fretting care
Now slumbering, ceases to subdue the heart
With anxious sadness, or to nurse despair;
Without this soft recruit; this couch of rest
Made soft by nature's hand, how soon the cheek
Of hardy manhood would be furrow'd o'er
With age's deepest wrinkles; and how soon
The poring sage, be to an idiot turn'd!
'Twas lately I beheld Castalio, gay
In all the bloom of youth; with charms adorn'd,
The fairest, nature's pencil ever drew
Upon the virgin's cheek; but ah, how chang'd
I now bemoan him! lost is every grace,
Pallid and wan his visage, wild his air!
Raving his speech; quite dimm'd his reason's light!

From whence this change? — A stranger to his couch
 Sleep that sweet visiter had long deny'd
 His eyes, their needful rest — of this bereav'd,
 The youth, whose cheerful gaity inspir'd,
 Whose wit enliven'd, and whose converse charm'd
 The smiling crowd, is to an object turn'd
 Of misery and horror; every eye
 Lamenting, what with joy it once beheld.

What numbers * live, this instant all confin'd,
 And sighing on the bed of languor, pour
 Their silent woes to heav'n, for soft repose
 To lull their sorrows! Pensive they attend
 The striking watch, and measure each sad hour
 By the quick pulse, that beats in ev'ry vein.
 With tortures rack'd, how many tire the skies
 In begging a short respite from their pains,
 Sigh for a moment's truce, in peaceful sleep
 To drown their agonies. How many torments
 With dark disquietudes that pierce the soul,
 Breathe out their ardent wishes to obtain
 A transient short oblivion of their woes!
 What India's gems, and all her richest mines,
 Want power to give, on thee thy heaven bestows;
 At each return of night, without a pray'r,
 Sleep, the kind welcome visiter returns,
 How punctual at the needful hour, and pours

Her poppies round the couch, to close thy eye,
Shed ~~and~~ o'er ev'ry sense her slumb'rous dew.

How kind that pitying pow'r, who throws each eve
A shade o'er * nature's face, which gently wooes
Each eye to slumber; from the curtain drives
Each ray of hurtful light; which would retard
Its balmy blessing! while night's drowsy veil
The soul to thoughtless indolence inclines!
Concealing every object, which might keep
The sense awake, which now is hush'd to rest,
While silence o'er the wide creation reigns.
How gently treads each animal; how still
The Darkness? Motion's self almost at rest!
While man retires to his soft couch, to taste
The sweets of needful rest; just such the care
Of the fond mother, hushing every noise,
When folded in her arms, she gently lulls
The child, fond object of her love to rest.

† Say, what kind pow'r, whose love, tho' undescry'd,
Still watchful for man's safety, throws his shield
Around our head each night; lost to each thought
Ourselves of danger, tho' the murderer stands
Close by our couch; his naked ponyard drawn
To sheath it in our bosom! thoughtless we

* Page 41.

† Page 41.

And unprepar'd to ward the destin'd blow !
Power how immense, compassion how divine,
That sends the silent shade to close the eye,
In slumbers --- then protects us, while we sleep !

* Reason now lost, resigns her sovereign sway ;
While fancy mounts her throne, and leads the mind
Thro' each wild maze imagination forms !
False incoherent images now crowd
The frantick head, and jumble in our dreams ;
Some rambling among Fairy fields, enjoy
A visionary bliss, with garlands crown'd ;
Their bones, tho' stretch'd on a damp wisp of straw,
And shelter'd with the cobwebs of a cell,
A pin their scepter, rags their royal robes ;
And motley feathers their imperial crown.
Others, quite senseless of their rooms of state,
The golden canopy their couch which shades,
Mourn in a dungeon, by wild fancy rais'd ;
Or pant for life, beneath the billows whelm'd,
Where wanting power to stem the surges, roll'd
Above their heads, benum'd with sudden fear
They give up ev'ry hope ; and tho' reclin'd
On beds of iv'ry, and a couch of down,
They sink all helpless and forlorn, no friend
To succour, in the furious eddy drown'd.

Such the vagaries of the rambling brain,
O'er ev'ry sense, when sleep its opiate pours.

* Nor this the only season, when the mind
With aery schemes inspir'd, her frolicks plays :
Live there not those, when reason seems to guide
Their wise and prudent choice, who waking dream ?
These flatter'd by a smile of fortune, place
Life's solid blessings in a toy, a plume,
A boasted crest, a star, and garter'd knee !
Bloated with pride, because her finest threads
The gawdy silk-worm from her bowels draws
To hide their nakedness; others, as blest
In heaps of golden lumber, happier still
If fraud or avarice augment their store,
Doat on their shining trash; demand a bow
Obsequious, from each bending servile knee
To pay 'em adoration ! many feed
On the thin aery diet of renown,
Feast on a puff of wind, which flattery blows,
And with the buz of vulgar praise, shake off
The man, and grow immortal ; — differ these
In wisdom, from the ragged wretch, who sleeps
Beneath a hedge's covert, and in dream
Exults, as in some stately palace hous'd ?

* Page 45.

Or

Or from the ideot's phrenzy, in his cell
Who link'd with binding fetters, yet in thought
Sits on his regal seat enthron'd, and waves
His rushy scepter o'er the bending crowd
Of prostrate subjects, trembling at his frown !

'Tis * midnight now --- creating fancy views
A thousand fleeting spectres thro' the gloom ;
Hovering above the vaulted grave, where sleeps
Their mould'ring dust, the mournful yew o'er shades.
Pale dreary forms, with gasty terrors arm'd
In awful state, now cross the dark'ned sky,
Offspring of fear ! and swifter than the ray
Of light'ning, glide along each haunted shade !
Now voices, more than mortal, seem to sound
From the dark ecchoing vaults ; deep groans are heard
To issue, from the hollow of each tomb ;
Striking the ear with dread ; while phantoms glide
Swift o'er the ragged ruins of the shrine
That holds their crumbling ashes ; till the morn
Now dawning, bids them fly the eye of day.
The traveller benighted, passing o'er
The gloomy spot, that shrowds the dead entomb'd,
Is shook with horror ; tales of nightly ghosts
Hov'ring above the turf, where sleeps their clay,

Now rush into his thought ; to aid his speed
From the dark haunted shade, fear lends a wing !
He dreads a backward look, his fortune blest,
If no amazing howl arrests his ear,
No ghastly shape his trembling eye surprise.

Shall man then dread an airy phantom, rais'd
By fancy's mimic power, a child, not man ;
Yet unamaz'd at heaven's tremendous frown,
Which reason, which religion, bids him fear,
And turns that fear to virtue ; which inspires
The heart, with solemn awe of him it fears.
The dark and lonely walk, night's solemn gloom,
Where spectres haunt, the visions of a dream,
Have pow'r to shake man's timorous heart, tho' soon
To drop mortality, and mount the skies,
Where none but unembodied essence dwells.

* Should some pale messenger, by heaven's command,
Sent from the mournful chambers of the grave,
Throw back the curtain at the solemn hour
Of midnight, and with ghastly looks, and pale
Like Brutus' genius, nodding at thy couch
Denounce — *to-morrow I will meet thee here* —
The firmest heart would shudder at the sound,
And tremb'ling wait the dread event with pain.
Yet when a voice from heav'n the soul alarms,

Prepare to meet thy God, with vengeance arm'd!
 How bold and unattentive we defy
 The awful summons, by an angel breath'd;
 In one short moment heard, forgot, disdain'd!

His boasted wisdom then let man resign,
 Wisdom, than folly weaker, to revolve
 On heaven's eternal king, without a fear;
 Who terrify'd with spectres of a dream,
 Smiles at a God, yet trembles at a shade!

Learn then, my soul, all other terrors vain,
 To dread that awful power, who, tho' beheld
 In mercy, scarce is without terror view'd.
 Whose red right hand, with vengeance when array'd
 Turns pale proud victors, withers on their brow
 The fading laurel — to each other, fear
 Tho' stranger long, when the hoarse trump of war,
 The thunder of the battle call'd to arm:
 Yet at his awful presence, pale they fly
 To the rocks shelter, and the mountains shade,
 To shield them from the light'ning of his eye.
 Whose dread majestic menace, when he rides
 On the swift cloud, or on the whirlwind's wing,
 With myriads of immortal guards, to quell
 All human pride, and lay it in the dust;
 Pale nature trembles; worlds are drove away!
 The heavens asunder cleft no more abide

His

His look, but from their angry God retire!
Be this man's sole ambition then, to court
Th' Almighty's favour; and avoid his frown!
All terrors then committed to the wind,
Secure he smiles at every other fear.

'Twas in the dead of * night, when nature lay
Involv'd in darkness, which a covering threw
O'er the wide universe, of thickest shade;
An eastern sage, all wakeful and alone,
Musing on subjects awful, high, divine,
Was startled by an awful vision sent
To earth from heaven: the phantom ghastly pale
Glar'd thro' the dark; a moment's pause allow'd,
To arm his soul with courage to attend
The message without dread — ' Shall wretched man,
' The heir of dust, and offspring of the clay,
' His life a shadow, and his age a span,
' Frail as a flow'r, and fleeting as a cloud,
' Whose strength is weakness, and whose thread of life
' A cobweb's ray, the softest breath destroys;
' Shall he assert, his great Creator near,
' Himself or pure, or upright, in whose eye
' The purest of man's race with guilt are stain'd?
' Shall the short tenants of a day, an hour,

- Boast their exalted virtues, or derive
- A merit from their service, who beholds
- The heavens but dross and dirt, his angels charg'd
- With folly — all their lustre, but a shade!
- Shall cherubs then, who bending at his throne
- Their faces veil, and tremble as they bow,
- Renounce all uprightness, yet mortals vaunt
- That purity, immortals dare not claim;
- A worm, a creature of the dust, contend
- In virtue, with the offspring of the sky?"

Hark! what a doleful voice! — the boading scream
• Disturbs the silence of the peaceful gloom;
'Tis the hoarse screech-owl, from the hollow oak
That sadly utters her nocturnal moan;
The sun her foe, she flies the vocal grove,
The blooming garden and the flow'ry vale,
To her not half so dear as night's brown shade!
Her favourite haunt, some ragged ruins cell,
Or tottering wall, with ivy overgrown:
The mould'ring precipice above her head
Threatens to tumble; while the toad, below,
And venom'd adders, hissing poison, crawl.
The sprightly morning which awakes to joy
Each creature else, to her no pleasure yields;

The shade her dark and solitary home,
Which pleas'd all day, and pensive she enjoys.

Just such his fate, were * guilty man allow'd
To enter the bright scenes above the sky,
Where heaven would seem a hell; its bliss, a pain;
Its joys torment him --- at the fountain head
Of happiness, nought found but pangs and shame!
Whose voice above could wild ambition claim
To sooth its pride? What humble knee would bow
And bend in adoration to the vain?
Could the blaspheming lip, the venom'd tongue
Canker'd with slander, taste, or feel a joy,
Joining the choirs above, that hourly pay
Their grateful tributes to heaven's golden throne!
Beauty and grandeur here must weep by turns;
No flatterers, in the temple of the sky
To offer incense to the proud and fair.
What tortures then must rack the envious breast,
What passions rend it, to behold in bliss
Myriads of happy beings, high enthron'd;
And drinking deep of each celestial joy!
Whatever blessings bloom above the sky,
The soul with innocence if unarray'd,
Wants power to taste; just like the bird of night,

Happy and blest, if cover'd in his gloom ;
Quite pain'd, and pensive in the blaze of day !

Shall then the boding * owl, the raven's voice
Croaking above our roofs, our peace annoy ?
Be tokens deem'd of our impending doom ?
And yet the soul be careless to attend
Those awful kind presages, that are meant
By heaven, to warn us — *we are soon to die.*
What are these dark incumbent clouds, that hide
The world each night ; what, but the fable pall
To throw o'er nature's herse, when she expires ?
Emblems of that eternal night, which soon
Shall shade the world, and all its beauties whelm
In utter darkness — what an image, sleep,
(Whose curtain soon my drowzy eye shall close)
Of that entire cessation, when each sense
Shall lose its function ; ~~be~~ of use no more ;
The silent chamber, and the bed of rest,
Point to the thoughtful soul that dreary land,
Where in oblivion lost, what pleas'd on earth
The eye and ear, are seen or heard no more.

What meant that † tongue of death, that solemn knell,
At midnight thus, which cleaves the silent air !

* Page 60.

† Page 61.

With mournful accents laden, how it wounds;
Bursting the door, that opens to our heart!
It surely has a voice, which wisdom hears,
A message to the living, from the dead,
Its errand this to man — ‘ In time prepare!
‘ The dread destroyer of your race is near!
‘ Your last great foe to life has long begun
‘ The chase; each fleeting hour is gaining ground!
‘ Behold the victor’s spoils — the paths he treads
‘ Are strew’d and cover’d o’er with hills of slain:
‘ The skull, the spade, the herse, the crawling worm,
‘ The sable coffin, and the wrapping shroud,
‘ The dreadful arms, that on his ensigns blaze!
‘ A scythe his weapon; and his harvest man!
‘ This moment has his flying javelin laid
‘ Some victim in the dust — whose point shall soon
‘ Be levell’d, to transfix each mortal’s heart.

The † charnel house, the mansions where the dead
In silence sleep; the sable marbled tomb,
Why should vain curious man consult, to read
Memorials of his own impending doom?
Where e’re he treads, or turns his pensive eye,
Numbers of these are planted in his view,
Point out the road, that leads him to a grave,

† Page 62.

Man’s

Man's destin'd end, his last eternal home!
Each town I enter shews some weeping eye,
The numerous trophies death has lately rais'd;
A crowd of mourners sighing round their pall,
Breathing their last adieu, as they attend
A friend, a son, or parent, to the tomb.
Above the door the black achievement hung,
The crape, the scutcheon, and the sable plume,
Have each a solemn voice, and hint to man
That kings and slaves, the aged and the young,
Must quit their rooms of state, and cells of clay,
With new inhabitants to crowd their grave.
Each hour we live, each converse which we join,
Death's triumphs are the melancholy theme,
Which sadden our discourse --- one, pensive moans
A languid friend, beyond the cordial's pow'r
To promise longer life; one sighs to hear
A lov'd companion, once, his bosom's joy,
Stretch'd on the bed of death, no more to rise;
Leaving his lifeless dust, sad scene of woe,
For some kind father, or a son, to moan.
What serious lectures these, to warn the heart
Of human frailty! Here the eye surveys
Old age worn out with slow consuming pains,
Soon lost in death --- there the sad story told
Of blooming childhood, wither'd in an hour;
Of youth, to pieces dash'd, tho' unperceiv'd
The dart, that lodg'd the victim in a tomb!

In each proud temple, patriots we behold
Changing their seats in senates, for a grave,
The born, too few in number to supply
The empty room, deserted by the dead!

* Say what are all the statues, which adorn
Our rooms of state! the images that shine
And gild our proud saloons --- our fathers busts!
Death's trophies, that in silence recognize
The fate of others, who from out the tomb,
Tho' dead, yet speak; and tell us we are dust!
I hear, I feel the solemn truth they read,
Confirm'd by weakned nature's slow decays,
Boding its final period in a grave.
What are these pangs, that dart thro' ev'ry vein,
The flaming fever, and the racking stone!
What, but th' approaches of man's cruel foe,
Each hour advancing nearer, to besiege
His fort of life; how feeble to withstand
The onset for a moment, when he plays
His engines, or to batter or destroy.
Are not these languors, the slow-beating vein,
The deep-felt pangs of each revolving day,
The secret schemes of death, tho' slow, yet sure,
To undermine the tottering frame, that holds
Life for a while --- then roll it in the dust.

* Page 63.

G

† Shall

† Shall then these omens, kindly meant by heaven,
To wake a deep attention in the soul,
Not gain belief, nor shake the heart with fear?
Each has a language, awful, solemn, loud,
And this their message — *man, prepare to dye!*
The regal diadem, the hero's crown,
The wreath that proudly binds the victors brow,
Be trodden in the dust, a peace to sign
With nature's awful God — a nobler prize,
Than clad in robes of state, to fill a throne.

^o Page 63.

The END of the SECOND BOOK.

N I G H T.

N I G H T.

S A C R E D P O E M.

B O O K III.

HOW gently * night now steals upon the day!
In silence, mounting her nocturnal throne!
Beneath whose shade, now pensive and alone,
The wakeful bird of eve, begins her song:
The airs how different the soft songster breathes,
From those the boding owl and raven pour
From their incumbent gloom, the ear to wound!
How various is her lay, of ev'ry grace
Melodious mistress, that can touch the sense
With joy, and make the harmony divine!
Hark! now she swells a shriller note, the strain
Now kindles into ardour! strikes the ear
With such an energy, it thinks the sound,
Tho' distant, from the nearest thicket pour'd!

* Page 64.

Faint and more faint anon, the minstrel breathes
Her languid musick, melts into a strain
Of softer melody---the liquid notes
Just breaking thro' the night to touch the ear;
Which in soft pleasing accents seem to dye
Along the distant vale, her musick charms.
Silence attentive hears her am'rous song;
And night stands list'ning to her thrilling tale.

How kind an * invitation this, to wooe
The soul, from the mad crowd to steal away;
This coy, this modest songster entertains
Those only, with her sweet enchanting lays,
Who chuse retirement, and these pensive shades.
Lost the soft melody she breathes each eve,
To the gay giddy rioters, who glow
With raptures, o'er the drunken midnight bowl.

Do thou, my soul, sequester'd from the throng,
When night each awful solemn thought inspires,
Fly at far nobler joys; the peace that flows
From innocence, from faith, from death disarm'd;
From heav'n, when smiling, and a God appears'd!
Pleasures unfelt; nor tasted by the soul
In folly's giddy round that ever roves,
Within itself still tremb'ling to retire!

Say, are we pleas'd, with Philomela's song,
And wish to hear it oft'ner, nearer still?
The stubborn heart subdu'd, the will resign'd,
The peace that conscience whispers to the mind,
Inspire the breast with melody more sweet,
A joy more pleasing, than the ravish'd ear
Drinks in, from Philomel's enchanting strains.

Have crowns their weight? Are diadems a prize?
The golden wreath, that binds the monarch's brow!
Allow 'em each important --- yet the hours
That folly wastes, think more important still.
The day, the night, devoted to her call
Are join'd in one, rejoin'd, and scarce suffice
To end the game, in deep suspense that holds
The anxious mind, with raging passions torn;
With fierce extremes of hope, and wild despair!
Supported by his crutches, there behold
A grey-hair'd venturer, a mere child in age,
Shuffling the pack with a weak trembling hand:
Sportive and gay, just hov'ring o'er a tomb,
He spins the die---till death cries, *come away*.
His ample fortune tott'ring at this throw,
The next perhaps in fatal ruin drowns.

Shall man be vain, when each sad * scene of life
Is dark'n'd with a fullen cloud of woe?

Each morn that rises, bearing on its wing,
More ills, than can be number'd by the day !
From plenty's lap, from health's gay florid bloom,
How oft has youth been snatch'd, to pine away,
And sigh each lonely hour in tears, confin'd
Upon a bed of languor, thence to fall,
(If unprepar'd, how dreadful were the stroke)
Into a gulph of flame, a sea of fire !
Or if not doom'd to dye, more wretched still !
Himself his own avenger, as he turns
His thoughts upon a life, with guilt distain'd.
How startled at the shaft the conqueror waves,
The bitterness of death approaching near ! †
See how the fever rages, how it flames,
Baffling the force of art ! while furies rouse
The waken'd conscience, as their snakes they roll
Full in his view ; and glaring seem to point,
At the dark cell, the deep abyfs below !
Perhaps the weeping mother turns her eye,
(The part'ner of her bed but lately torn
And ravish'd from her breast,) in tears beholds
The last of all her blooming beauteous train,
The offspring of their chastest love expire !
In vain she lifts his head, the cordial pours,
To mitigate his pangs, and sooth his pain ;
T' unseal his eye, to take a last adieu :

Her tender cares the period to prolong
 Of fleeting life, all fruitless — see he droops
 Fainting, all breathless in her clasping arms,
 And on a parent's sighing breast expires.
 While the last groan, that tore the soul away,
 Leaves her abandon'd to her silent woes,
 Without a friend to succour, or to sooth
 Her pensive hours; to mix a friendly tear
 Of comfort, to console her widow'd age.

† While some thus pant for life, and bend the knee
 To heav'n, to lengthen out its scanty span,
 Others, quite tir'd with earth's delusive toys,
 Sigh for a shorter passage to the tomb.
 See, if thy eye can bear the pensive scene,
 The sad variety of crowding woes
 Which darken human life, make death a prize!
 Here the slow ling'ring atrophy consumes
 The wasting victim — there the cancer gnaws
 With its relentless tooth, thro' ev'ry vein
 Spreads its dire venom; till at last it gains
 A passage to the heart. What numbers feel
 A rack of agonies, asunder torn
 By the convulsive stone; their cheeks are dew'd
 With falling drops, their eye-balls wildly roll!
 Ev'n night condole with her affected sons,

† Page 68.

And

Her

And sheds a tear upon their sad abodes !
 Severe these pangs; more dreadful his, who groans
 Beneath the pressures of a tortur'd mind ;
 By conscience rack'd, and dark'ned by despair !
 'Tho' rob'd in ermine, circled with a crown,
 Lodg'd in his rooms of state, and underneath
 A canopy of gold, by crowds ador'd,
 More pitied than the exile in the mine,
 Condemn'd for life ; than the poor fetter'd slave,
 Tugging the oar, and to his galley chain'd.

Ye wretched happy ! joyous, without joy !
 Gay, when in torture, smiling when in pain ;
 Say can the sparkling cup, the wreath that binds
 The victor's temples, when in triumph borne,
 Shed comfort on the bosom in despair,
 Or heal the gash, when conscience gives the wound !

† Hear then, what reason preaches to the vain !
 Ye, Folly's eldest sons, while pleasure crowns
 The feast, mirth heighten'd by the nectar'd bowl ;
 Mark what variety of human woes
 Quite sou'r the languid sweets, how thinly spread
 And scatter'd thro' this gloomy vale of tears !
 When ²⁶ joy and sorrow, foster-twins await
 Man's life, by turns; how blest, and how forlorn !

Ye slaves to sense, who feast on joys that die
When scarce possess'd, the phantoms of a dream,
O tell your hearts, when luxury her sweets
Pours from her lap, and sheds her odours round,
How oft the deadly poison, and perfume
Mix in one draught; the rose how oft that crowns
The raptur'd forehead, breaths a fatal bane,
Bitter as wormwood; as malignant far,
And sharper than affliction's sharpest gall;
Death, tho' unseen, lurks in the drunkard's bowl;
And in the harlot's soft embraces kills.
Fruitions these unenvy'd, unimplor'd,
That flat'ring wound; and please, but to destroy.

* Say, what those shining sparks, which faintly pour
A weak and glimm'ring light along the gloom;
'Tis glow-worms we behold, which on each spray
Now shed their drops of fire, and while the sun
Is absent, light their silver lamps to cheer
The darkness, and to play a feeble beam;
Yet ah, how dim the ray! how scarce perceiv'd,
Which strives in vain to dissipate the shades!
Should some benighted traveller, with cold
Quite shiv'ring, hover round their mimic fires,
Or doubtful of his way, when darkness shrouds
The heavens, these languid tapers chuse, to guide

* Page 71.

Ye

H

His

His steps along the gloom, in hopes to shun
The dreadful precipice, or gulph beneath;
Too weak their faint and twinkling light to aid
The wretch, bewilder'd in the wood or vale.

Such reason's glow-worm ray, so faint her * pow'r,
That blinds, and not enlightens, till her eye
Is open'd by that heav'nly beam, that shews
The beauteous path that leads to bliss supream:
Which reason uninspir'd had never found;
Her truths, half errors; dark, her brightest rays;
Like twilight, partly shining, partly shade.

* What meteor that, which lights the western sky!
Portentous omen! thro' the flaming air
It takes a fearful round, with rapid speed
From world to world; see, how it trails along
A length of streaming fires, that dart, and blaze
O'er half the hemisphere; each eye surveys
The bloody stranger, chill'd and in amaze,
Denouncing woes to man — while some behold
In the red star a sanguine flag, that glows
Aloft, hung out by wrath divine, to pour
Its terrors on a world, with guilt distain'd!
Some, in its glaring visage clearly read,
The fate of nations, and the threaten'd doom

Of kings and kingdoms; to another's eye,
It shook, or seem'd to shake, its blazing hair,
That scatter'd famine, pestilence and war,
Heav'n's great triumvirate, to damp the joy,
And dart a terror thro' each human heart.

* Dread not the comet's visit, since its flames
Unboding, glitter with a harmless blaze;
But let thy thought, less curious to enquire
Whose fate it threatens, what events foretells;
(The phantoms these of superstitious fear)
Rather adore that mighty hand, which lights
Its fiery orbit, guides its rapid way
Along the fields of æther, as it rolls
Now nearer to the glowing sun, and drinks
Its fiercest ardours; now retires beyond
This planetary system, and is lost
Midst other skies, and distant worlds unknown!

Ah then acquit the comet's orb, nor charge
The desolating plague, nor wasting war
To its dread influence---no foe to man,
It rolls its fiery train along the sky!
When virtue pines, and vice triumphant sheds
Its poison round, much surer omens these
Of heavenly vengeance, and a God inflam'd:
The star is clear'd---'tis guilt the world arraigns!

* Page 75.

H 2

† See

§ See at this midnight hour, a different scene
 The curious wakes, the vulgar eye alarms!
 See, quivering in the northern sky, a blaze
 Of meteors kindles, with refracted beams
 Crossing each other --- now the radiant streams
 Mingle and meet in one, the flaming air
 A beauteous deluge of conflicting fires,
 Which now asunder start, like troops that fly
 Precipitate along the martial field!
 Now, without motion glow; anon assume
 A quivering radiance, which expands their flames
 Wide o'er the hemisphere; this hour when view'd,
 Awful and ludicrous at once, they seem
 The antick wild vagaries of the sky;
 Glittering, but to amuse; the next beheld,
 The eye all dread suspects, some hand divine
 Plays off the dumb artillery of the skies,
 The light'ning's flash, without the thunder's noise.

The † scene was wonder first; 'tis now amaze!
 A general panic seizes all, who view;
 Throbs in each heart, and turns each visage pale.
 Fear joins the tremb'ling crowd, which only serves
 To propagate the terror, while they catch
 Contagion from each other's voice and eye!
 Each speaking the dumb language of despair!

§ Page 77.

† Page 78.

Some view tremendous scenes aloft, the air
Crowded with warring troops; with helmets helms
Conflicting — fields with seas of gore distain'd:
And list'ning, seem to hear the distant groans
In their last gasp, from dying warriors pour'd.
Others more pain'd, presage more dreadful woes,
Read in the blazing skies prophetic beams
The world's extinction, and all nature's doom!
Behold, they cry, those bleeding colours, wav'd
Along the ruddy air; the period nigh,
The fatal hour has struck, which puts an end
To ev'ry human glory! See how wan
The blasted stars appear; their dying light
Scarce seen, behind the meteor's stronger blaze!
Anon the great arch-angel's trump shall sound,
Heard from earth's center to her distant poles,
The living to amaze; the dead to raise.

† If then these waving lights, in streams that play
Innocuous round our head, such terror pour
Into man's heart, what dread, and deeper pain
Shall wound his aching breast, when wrath divine,
Which holds its flames imprison'd now, shall spread
Red torrents, deluges of melting fire,
The earth, and all its beauties to consume,
Leaving a blank in nature, where they burn.

The day, the solemn day, is on the wing,
In which the heav'ns, like a parch'd-folded roll,
The thunders bursting loud, shall pass away;
Each element dissolve; till in a blaze
The world at last, no more a world, expires.
That mighty hand above, which open'd wide
The windows of yon heav'n, unbar'd the folds
That held the fountains of the deep enclos'd;
Shall once unlock his magazines of fire,
Central and heavenly; from their caverns pour
A second deluge, which shall burst its way,
Unconquer'd, unrestrain'd, wheree'r it glows;
And in one gen'ral wreck, all nature shrowd.
What energy must drive the rushing flame;
The burning tempest with what fury blaze;
When pow'r divine incens'd, and heavenly rage
Breathes, to inspire the torrent as it rolls?
The sacred temple, the imperial dome,
The kingly palace, and proud marbl'd tow'r;
The rocks eternal base, unshook before,
Shall mingle in one smoaking mass, in vain
Resisting, where the ruddy torrent burns.
Each boasted pile that human art has rais'd,
The arch, the column, the high tow'ring spire;
All blaze to spread the ruin, and supply
Fuel, to feed the wild outrageous flame!
How impotent all human pow'r, to stay

The rapid deluge ; like the snow that hides
Their tops, when the parch'd mountains melt away,
When waters burn, and seas augment the blaze ;
Shall man's frail heart, unshaken, undismay'd,
When stars are falling, angels own a fear,
And sigh from heav'n to view a world in flames,
Maintain its peace, amidst the dreadful glare,
Of fiery elements ; the last dire blaze,
Which the lost earth, to dust and ashes turns !

From nature's ruins now, remove thy eye,
A spectacle more pleasing to survey ! *
Rising in clouded majesty, the moon,
Begins her progress up the eastern sky,
Awful and grand her aspect, as she climbs
The steep of heaven ; tho' beauteous, yet her beams
Not fully open'd -- as she mounts her sphere,
She brightens, and with fairer lustre glows,
Till higher still advanc'd, her silver orb,
With fullest light, and peerless glory shines,
Now seated on her high nocturnal throne.

Amidst the stars the fairest now, her beam
Bright'ns the arch of heav'n ; each raptur'd eye,
And all creation cheering with her rays ;
Those soft and gentle splendors, which she pours

* Page 81.

From her full orb—thou, beauteous queen of shades,
 Fair regent of the night, oh teach my soul
 The high ambition, nobly to transcribe
 Thy growing lustre; fairer thou, and I
 More virtuous, each momentous hour that flies!
 Let others, fond to mimick courts and kings,
 Be proud of titles, raptur'd with a toy,
 Hang out their gaudy tinsel to invite
 Each foolish eye to wonder at their blaze;
 Be it my choice, my int'rest and my joy,
 To imitate thy purity, more pure
 Each step, thy silver orb ascends the sky!
 My heart less blam'd, my conduct more refin'd;
 Each passion hush'd, and fordid with restrain'd:
 Lost ev'ry wild desire, as I approach
 Nearer yon golden mansions, which diffuse
 A richer light, than radiates from thy beam,
 That with unfading lustre shall adorn
 The spheres above, when ev'ry beauteous ray
 Now glit'ring from thy orb, is quench'd in shades.

How gay and various ev'ry scene, the day *
 Opens to please the eye! each sense how joy'd
 With each fair object, which the morn unfolds!
 Vanish'd how quick the scene, how soon withdrawn
 The lovely prospect, which the night conceals

Beneath her veil; which dims the dark'ned sky!
But see, to brighten; and to cheer the brow
Of low'ring night; and dissipate her frown,
A fainty ray, reflecting through the air
A weak and sickly light, just gives the eye
A glimm'ring prospect of the beauties, sown
On nature's flow'ry surface, till the moon
Collecting all her beams, removes the veil
From off the face of night; each object shews,
Tho' not in bright, in softest charms array'd.

As the * clear azure spreads her silver light
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
What floods of glory burst from off the skyes;
Say, if to please the eye, or to amaze,
Night seeming only a diminish'd day!
How grand the scene, magnificent the blaze!
Light above light, and world by world outshone,
Where dust is pearl; whose dross the purest gold.

In heaven's high arching concave, see the moon
Refulgent, glitt'ring on her silver throne!
Nor shines she there alone—the starry train
Waiting their beauteous regent, as she flies,
Attend her progress; pouring from their urns,
To mingle with her light, their golden beams.

Again the hills arise, the mountains soar, ..
The cities lofty spires, and gilded domes
Shoot up their heads aloft; while in the wave
Millions of stars now trembling dip their beams,
And ocean seems but a reflected sky,
Thick sown with pearly drops—a prospect fair
Now opening, wider than the eye can glance,
Various, as fancy's roving pow'r can feign.

The landscape, pencil'd by some curious hand,
Where nature seems by mimic art out-done;
The veiny marble soften'd into flesh,
And almost warm with life, invite the eye
To gaze, and wonder—shall the weak essays
Of puny art look graceful, and surprize;
And yet no raptures touch the soul, when view'd
Those wonders heav'n displays, the structures rais'd
By skill omnipotent, and art divine?
The pyramid's proud top, tho' tow'ring high,
And lost among the clouds, the work, tho' rear'd
By twice ten thousand hands, shall this be deem'd
Rival to those magnificent displays
Of heav'nly pow'r, which, with one breath can call
Worlds into being—the last hour, but dust!
Shall the lewd ev'ning scenes of guilt and joy,
Tho' glit'ring with a thousand mirrors, vie
With these eternal lamps above, that glow
Within heaven's golden concave, pour a light

O'er

O'er earth and seas, and worlds perhaps unknown!
The proudest monuments of art, when view'd
With those the arm divine has plan'd, and rais'd,
Dwindle to atoms — seen and then disdain'd!

Nor does the * queen of night one face display,
Or shine with constant light; her silver orb
Still changing, beauteous still, however chang'd
Her aspect or her stages; now she glows
All lustre, with full light her orbit fill'd;
Her beams diminish'd now, a crescent binds
Her radiant brow, which fading soon away,
Her beauty dies; 'till robb'd of all her rays,
She rolls a beamless orb along the sky!
Nor through the heav'ns does this bright wand'rer chuse
One stated progress — with descending day
Sometimes she rises, and begins her flight
Just when the parting sun withdraws his beam!
Sometimes her journey is defer'd, not seen
Before the midnight watches, when she steals
Quite unobserv'd upon the sleeping eye;
Now on the edges of the western wave
She just appears; a transient visit pays,
But scarce enlight'ns --- brighter strait, she mounts
Her silver throne; begins her nightly round;
And blazing on her chariot, from the east

Prepares her flight nor stops her rapid wheel,
Till the bright partner of her milder sway
Rising in regal majesty, displays
A fuller light, and quenches all her beams.

* Awful and fair exemplar, who do'st hold
A mirror out to man! thy full and wane
Painting how clear, his fortune's ebb, and flow!
Vicissitudes of giddy chance, by turns
That checquer human life with smiles, and woe,
And mingle ev'ry pleasure, with a tear.
How oft have the faint ecchoes of renown?
Been hush'd in silence? In oblivion's shade
The brightest worth how oft, and fairest fame
By envy's canker, or the venom'd tongue,
Been wither'd in an hour? The royal head
Now bleeding on a scaffold, which so late
Was hail'd, ador'd, and circled with a crown.
Have riches found a rock, whereon to build
A stable mansion? Does their owner boast,
A pow'r or wisdom to ensure their stay?
Can pow'r detain, or wisdom clip their wings;
Now melting, like a ball of snow, when thaw'd
By summer's suns; now, with an eagle's speed
Taking their flight, to be retriev'd no more!

* Page 89.

Has

Has not the smiling bridegroom's bower, when strew'd
With roses, and enrich'd with sweet perfumes,
Prov'd the dark entrance often to a tomb?
How happy, and how wretched in an hour!
The voice that lately spoke the raptur'd pair
For life united, ah, how soon proclaims
A long divorce, and seals the fates decree
With melting sorrow -- *dust, to dust return!*

Nor when we sorrow, do we weep * alone!--
Our friends that cheer each gloomy hour of life,
Share in our anguish, and partake our pains;
And feel themselves, the pangs our bosoms moan.
Health, the soft balm of nature, that inspires
And renders ev'ry human blessing dear,
By what precarious tenure do we hold!
Heav'n's kindest gifts, how transient when acquir'd;
Earn'd with what toil; how fleeting when enjoy'd?
The partner of our bosom's bliss, how soon,
How oft is snatch'd by death, when in our arms!
While youth's green vigour blooming on the cheek
This hour grows pale, and turns the next to dust.

Survey yon feather'd strangers, on each * bough
Perching, or sportive in the flow'ry vale!

* Page 90.

† Page 90.

Their

Their plumes how gay! how various is their song!
You hail the sweet musicians, court their stay,
Quite raptur'd with their beauty and their strains:
But see, they stretch the wing,—you wooe in vain!
The least intruding sound, a sudden glance,
A silent whisper drives 'em from the grove;
Startled they mount the skies, for ever gone;
Their beauties please, their music charms no more!
Would wisdom chuse a happiness, which bears
Date with their visit, with their flight expires;
By moments measur'd out, and not by years;
As brittle as the spider's trembling rays,
Shook by a breeze, and by a breath destroy'd;
Be man's ambition then, an aim more high
Than sublunary bliss, that cheats and smiles,
Wish'd for, possess'd, and vanish'd in an hour,
While the deluded heart, the phantom fled,
Sorrows and bleeds o'er its departed joy;
No gift, a prize, or blessing worth its care,
Short of immortal; cheaper, than divine;
Ethereal, pure, sublime, high-flavour'd bliss.

† Tho' the sad solemn truth, each clime and age
Have ratify'd, and seal'd it with a tear,
Behold the turns of fate, the smiles and frowns

Of heav'n, how kind, and dreadful in an hour ?
See there *Chaldea's* sage, what lavish stores
Of riches, fortune in his lap has pour'd !
He treads on floors of cedar, while the rock
Distils its oil, to cheer his smiling brow .
View there his public state, princes revere
His awful dignity ; the aged hear,
And listen to his wisdom, half inspir'd ;
Each eye beholds him, with a longing joy ;
Upon his head each tongue a blessing pours,
Nor less the parent, than the monarch blest !
A crowd of blooming sons his board surround,
A train of beauteous daughters clasp his knee,
Those to support a father's tremb'ling age,
Those to inspire and glad him with a smile !
To speak him still more awful, see a train
Of menial slaves await his high command,
Catching his nod, or tremb'ling at his frown :
At once his guard and glory — human bliss
Was never more compleat, nor human woe
More sudden or more sad — the light'ning's flame
That pierc'd his flocks, and emptied all their folds,
Was scarce so swift and dreadful, as the blow
That wither'd all his blooming hopes, and lay'd
The mournful sufferer, weeping in the dust :
Can envy want a tear, a sigh refrain,
Not pity, nor be partner in his woes ,

Turning

Turning her pensive eye around, to view
 The wretched parent, (parent now no more)
 Robb'd of the pledges of his love, in clay
 All wrap'd, and shrowded in a silent tomb;
 His covering is the sky; a dunghill chose
 His pillow, where he breathes his nightly moan,
 Nor yet arraigns the sky—his ermine chang'd
 To filthy rags—his golden stores to dust;
 The venerable fire, who taught the wife
 More wisdom, from whose lip instruction flow'd,
 Which guided youth, refin'd the thoughts of age,
 Now censure wounds, or folly's tongue derides.
 Heaven's darling late, high seated on his throne,
 Oblig'd to take his lodging in a cell,
 By dragons tenanted; his dark abode
 The screech-owl's ragged cliff, or haunted shade!

But why consult we records so * remote
 Of distant ages; which long since have roll'd,
 Of this afflicting truth; in every clime
 Each period that is fled, the giddy wheel
 Of fortune still maintains its whirling round;
 Her favourites, who to-day enjoy her smile
 Elate in glory, like the full-orb'd moon;
 To-morrow, from beneath a cottage roof,
 A prison's cover, or a dungeon's gloom

Whelm'd in the depths of misery, may feel
Their joys and raptures ending in a groan;
Man's bliss and woe, his sunshine and his shade,
His sighs and transports, mingling in an hour,
How like the moon's for ever-varying sphere,
Now bright, now brighter still; till by degrees
Her less'ning lustre fades, is seen no more;
In one short period, one revolving round,
A globe of light, a ball of darkest shade.

I * view her now—how quench'd are all her beams!
Strip'd of her silver radiance, how she glares,
Her visage dip'd in blood? the solar rays
That fill'd with borrow'd light her shining sphere,
The interposing earth now hides, and throws
O'er her dark orbit its own gloomy shade.
She sickens now, her languid light decays
By slow gradations; faint and fainter gleams,
Till, like the virgin's cheek, with sickness pal'd,
That withers all her beauty with a cloud,
Her radiance quite obscur'd, her light expires.
What crowds, how many eyes now strain, to view
Her lamp, when dark'ned, who disdain'd to gaze
At the fair lucid star, in glory rob'd;

* Page 94.

X

When

When thron'd in state, she drove along the sky
 Her sister chariot, and where'er it roll'd
 Pour'd o'er the realms of night, a fainter day?
 Her beams eclips'd, how many press to view?
 Her lustre, when most bright, how few admire?

Thus in the blaze and sunshine of our fame,
 When heaven propitious beams its softest smile,
 Fortune's indulgent favours pass the eye
 Unheeded, unobserv'd; but if our fate
 Is dark'ned with a cloud, whose gloom obscures
 Our former glories, see what crowds appear,
 Who heedless of our bliss, when fully bloom'd,
 Now throw a look of wonder on our shade!

* Distinction thus that mounts the highest sphere;
 The scepter'd king, in ermine robb'd, and gold;
 And garter'd nobles, not unlike the moon,
 Have every blemish mark'd, when vice obscures,
 Or the least spot, their fame or virtue stains;
 Each eye, a critick here; how keen to view,
 How curious to observe, minutest flaws!

† Page 95.

With

With less reproach the vulgar may offend,
Their guilt diminish'd, as their station mean.
But when birth stoops, when royalty descends,
Forgetful of the summit it has gain'd,
How shameful is the fall, with virtue lost,
To earn, of being great, the wretched fame?
Here malice with her eagle eye surveys
Each stain that blots their honour; censures blast
From her shrill trumpet pour'd, each flaw unveils;
While calumny's soft whisper spreads around,
And swells the smallest spark into a blaze.
A comet may descend beneath the sky,
For months and years withdraw its vanish'd beams,
And scarce an eye perceive its lustre veil'd;
But if a shade, tho' transient, hides the moon,
What crowds are seen, her dark'ned orb to gaze;
Which seldom view'd her, when with light array'd.

Far † different was the scene, when late I chose
Along yon hanging western cliff to range;
Night's lucid lamp emerging from her shade;
At the steep mountain's base, the sea all clear,
Had spread beneath its silver crystal waves
Into a smooth expanse, which shining held

† Page 96.

K 2

A fair

A fair and watery mirror to the skies ;
 The firmament's unmeasur'd heights above
 Shew'd its bright concave; thick beset with stars ;
 The full-orb'd moon, the fairest of the train,
 In the clear wave below. now seem'd to view
 Herself delighted, while the azure main,
 Reflects her silver image to the sky ;
 Her sackcloth now remov'd, she seems to glow
 With double lustre, and with conscious pride
 Beholds ten thousand eyes, that joy to view,
 Her radiant orb, just rescu'd from its shade.

† Nor does her beam, the darkness only cheer ;
 More wide her sovereign empire, she extends
 Her awful sway o'er all the subject main !
 Her orb, like some imperial scepter, swells
 Or sinks the ocean ; mounting now the tides
 Above their banks ; now ordered to subside
 Bids them return again within their shores,
 Taught by her dread command to ebb, and flow.

Shall then the vast abyss her empire own,
 And man not feel the influence of the skies ?

Her orb have power to raise or sink the waves,
Depress, or lift an ocean: nor the joy
That blooms from yonder heaven have force to move,
Or melt the ravish'd soul; her hopes to raise
And turn each ardent wish the bosom breathes
Into ~~fruition~~; felt, before enjoy'd?
Tho' beautiful the lunar lamp, yet far
Above her argent empire, pleasures glow,
Which fancy, mounted on her boldest wing
Strives to conceive, and hopes to paint in vain.
Earth's most refulgent glories lose their charms
When heaven inspires the heart; the regal throne
And diadem of kings but faintly shine
When darken'd by the lustre of the skies.
Yon arch of sapphire, spangled o'er with gold,
Is but the floor of its divine abodes;
What then its proud apartments, what the light,
Its radiant palaces must pour around;
(By mortal sense effulgence not endur'd)
How bright with glories; how enrich'd with joy!

* Ye mansions of repose, ye beauteous spheres,
That far outshine these lamps, the eye beholds
Spread thro' the azure of the kindling sky;
Oh dart your winning influence to my soul;
Softens each passion, damp each low desire

* Page 98.

Which

Which fixes her to earth; oh, warm each thought
With ardent wishes, panting for those joys,
Sublime, celestial, rapturous, which shall flow
In one eternal circle, when the sea
Shall cease to roll, when yon fair lunar light,
Her splendors lost, shall cheer the night no more;

F I N I S.

